

EARNING A LETTER GRADE IN STUDENT-TEACHING

Assigning a letter-grade to a student-teacher is an extremely difficult task, for several different reasons. First, it is ultimately the University Supervisor's responsibility to assign this grade; however, this Supervisor does not observe the student-teacher on a daily basis as does the Cooperating Teacher. Second, the student-teacher does not perform specific, easily-gradeable, tasks that are themselves easily deemed equivalent to tasks performed in other courses that are considered when assigning a letter-grade for those other courses (e.g. tests, quizzes, projects, homework, etc.).

Third, student-teaching is vastly different than any of your other coursework. In those other courses, you were expected to "learn" material and be able to either recall it or use it in some way for the assessment. However, student-teaching has traditionally been a time where you are expected to immediately be able to use all that you have learned in your other courses and be assessed as to how well you can do this. For many, this method of assigning a grade proves to be unfair, since some student-teachers take longer than others to make the connections between coursework and the student-teaching experience.

Fourth, it is possible that you will be assigned a placement in which the freedom to perform in the way that your University Supervisor desires is simply not possible. While sad, this is sometimes the case. Fifth, improvement is vitally important during student-teaching, a factor that is not easily assessed, since a letter-grade may be seriously affected by some initially poor assessment grades.

While a host of other reasons exists to show the difficulty of assigning a letter-grade to the student-teaching experience, these will suffice to make my most important point: a letter-grade during student-teaching, while objective to the point of you are either doing certain things or not, is also subjective to the expertise and professionalism of your Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor, even if we complete forms that have "objective" numerical grades attached to them. You should trust this relationship between these two professionals and that they are working in your best interest. They will spend quite a bit of time discussing what is going on in your classrooms and how you are performing. You will not be graded in comparison to your peers who are student-teaching. You will be assigned a grade based on how well you are achieving certain standards.

Keep in mind that an "A" is NOT my most common grade given for student-teaching, rather it is most likely an A- or a B+. Both of these grades are very very good. An A is simply outstanding. A student who is given a B is an average student teacher, one who is given a B- needs to show some improvement before I believe success can happen in their own classroom, and one who is given a C+ or a C is probably not yet ready to have their own classroom and might need to

consider substitute-teaching before earning a teaching position, or coming back for another student-teaching experience.

When I determine what grade you have earned during your experience, I will look at your performance on seven different assessments. These assessments are listed below, along with the criteria used to determine your grade in each, and the percentage of the final grade that each assessment holds. I will record your gpa (based on your letter grade) for each assignment and assign grades based on the following scale: A: 3.85-4.00, A-: 3.5-3.84, B+: 3.15-3.49, B: 2.85-3.14, B-: 2.5-2.84, C+: 2.15-2.49, C: <2.15.

1) Student Teaching Competency Form (30%)

- average of 3.70 – 4.00 earns A (4.0)
- average of 3.40 – 3.69 earns A- (3.7)
- average of 3.10 – 3.39 earns B+ (3.3)
- average of 2.80 – 3.09 earns B (3.0)
- average of 2.40 – 2.79 earns B- (2.7)
- average of 2.10 – 2.39 earns C+ (2.3)
- average of <2.10 earns C (2.0)

2) University Supervisor Observations (2 @ 15% each)

- average of 3.60 – 4.00 earns A (4.0)
- average of 3.30 – 3.59 earns A- (3.7)
- average of 3.00 – 3.29 earns B+ (3.3)
- average of 2.70 – 2.99 earns B (3.0)
- average of 2.30 – 2.69 earns B- (2.7)
- average of 2.00 – 2.29 earns C+ (2.3)
- average of <2.00 earns C (2.0)

3) PDE-430 (10%)

- 11 – 12 points earns A (4.0)
- 9 – 10 points earns A- (3.7)
- 7 – 8 points earns B+ (3.3)
- 5 – 6 points earns B (3.0)
- 3 – 4 points earns B- (2.7)
- 1 – 2 points earns C+ (2.3)
- <1 point earns C (2.0)

4) TWS/Senior Portfolio (10%, TWS first placement, Portfolio second)

- points of 70 – 85/quality of A earns A (4.0)
- points of 65 – 69/quality of A- earns A- (3.7)
- points of 60 – 64/quality of B+ earns B+ (3.3)
- points of 55 – 59/quality of B earns B (3.0)
- points of 50 – 54/quality of B- earns B- (2.7)
- points of 45 – 49/quality of C+ earns C+ (2.3)
- points of <45/quality of C earns C (2.0)

5) Cooperating Teacher's Grade (10%)

- A (4.0)
- A- (3.7)
- B+ (3.3)
- B (3.0)
- B- (2.7)
- C+ (2.3)
- C (2.0)

6) Other Assignments (journals, videotape analysis, outside observations) (10%)

Missing two journals drops one +/- grade. Missing video reflection drops two +/- grades.

Missing one outside observation drops two +/- grades.

- A (4.0)
- A- (3.7)
- B+ (3.3)
- B (3.0)
- B- (2.7)
- C+ (2.3)
- C (2.0)

The bottom line is that earning an "A" in student-teaching is not an automatic event, as some people have come to presume. This phenomenon should be as difficult as earning an "A" in Calculus 3 or another higher-level mathematics course. In fact, it is a "B" letter-grade that should be the most common grade in student-teaching. It is a simple fallacy that "you will not get a job with any grade less than an 'A' in student-teaching." Keep in mind that two people who earn the exact same letter-grade for student-teaching can have vastly different recommendation letters sent to potential employers. One of the most important things that you should desire from your University Supervisor is not an "A" in student-teaching, rather a Letter of Recommendation that states two things: 1) This candidate has the ability and the potential to become a great teacher; and 2) I would not hesitate for a moment to allow my child to be taught by this candidate. Those two things will help you to obtain interviews and a teaching position much sooner than an "A" grade that "everybody gets in student-teaching." I highly doubt that you would want a letter of recommendation to say something like "He complained so much that I just gave him an A to keep him quiet. I really wouldn't hire him."

With this said about your grade, it should be very straightforward what you need to do to earn an "A" in student-teaching. Good luck and work hard. Together, we will closely monitor your progress along the way and will do our best to help you become an excellent teacher.